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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 28 July 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you of continued heightened tensions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, due to the illegal and repressive practices being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people under its brutal occupation. In complete defiance of the unequivocal calls by the international community to de-escalate the situation in Occupied East Jerusalem, Israel is continuing its aggressions against the Palestinian civilian population, including worshippers and peaceful demonstrators, and against holy sites in the City, particularly the Haram al-Sharif, which houses the Aqsa Mosque.

As we have repeatedly appealed, we continue to call upon the international community, particularly the Security Council, to work diligently to stem the dangerous deterioration to avert further bloodshed and instability, ensure respect for the relevant resolutions, including with regard to the status of Occupied East Jerusalem as occupied territory and the prohibition of all acts aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the City, and ensure respect for the historic status quo at the Haram al-Sharif.

On the evening of Thursday, 27 July 2017, thousands of Palestinians entered the Aqsa Mosque compound in Occupied East Jerusalem after nearly two weeks of peaceful demonstrations against Israel's provocative, discriminatory and unilateral measures imposed on Friday, 14 July 2017. However, following sunset Maghrib prayers, Palestinian worshippers were met, yet again, with repression by the Israeli occupying forces. At least 100 Palestinian worshipers were detained from inside the mosque, and the occupying forces fired rubber-coated steel bullets, stun grenades and tear gas at the crowds in the holy compound, injuring dozens of Palestinian civilians. Today, Friday, 28 July 2017, the occupying authorities imposed restrictions on entry to the compound, including banning Palestinian men under the age of 50 from access to the Haram al-Sharif, in flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their freedom of worship.

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Moreover, Israeli occupying forces remained heavily deployed in the Aqsa compound and throughout the Old City of East Jerusalem, as well as in other cities, towns and villages across the occupied West Bank. This display of military force, along with the direct measures taken in and around the Aqsa compound, are aggravating an already dangerous situation. We must therefore reiterate our demand that all such acts of aggression and provocations and incitement regarding the Aqsa Mosque compound stop immediately.

We further appeal again to the international community to compel the occupying Power to respect the historic status quo of the Aqsa compound and comply with the numerous relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), and General Assembly resolutions pertaining to the holy sites. The occupying Power must show respect for the sanctity of this holy site and respect the role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as the custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. All illegal and unilateral measures by the occupying Power must be reversed, and guarantees must be put in place that such measures, or any other provocative measures, for that matter, will not be repeated, as they will only risk exacerbating religious sensitivities, which must be averted at all costs.

This explosive situation also continues to spill over to other areas across the occupied West Bank. Today, a Palestinian young man was shot dead by Israeli occupying forces north of Al-Khalil (Hebron), in the occupied West Bank. The occupying Power has claimed, as in so many other uncorroborated incidents, that Abdullah Taqatqa, aged 24, from Bethlehem, had tried to "stab" Israeli occupying forces. However, witnesses reported that "Israeli forces shot at him while he was around 20 metres away from them" and that Taqatqa "didn't have any type of knife with him or any kind of weapon".

Also in Al-Khalil, yesterday, around 100 Israeli illegal settlers forcibly and violently took over a Palestinian home in the Old City. Human rights and civil society activists documented on video the raid by extremist settlers of the Abu Rajab family home right under the watch and protection of Israeli occupying forces. Moreover, videos posted on Facebook show occupying forces shoving and attacking members of the Abu Rajab family as hundreds of illegal settlers applauded.

In addition to the above-mentioned violations by the occupying Power and its terrorist settlers, Israel continues to further provoke and incite with new announcements of illegal schemes to annex Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Yesterday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his support for so-called "legislation" aimed at the illegal annexation of settlements illegally constructed on Palestinian land and in which more than 150,000 Israeli settlers illegally reside. The so-called "Greater Jerusalem bill" would add the illegal settlements of "Gush Etzion", "Efrat", "Betar Illit", "Givat Ze'ev" and "Ma'aleh Adumim" within Occupied East Jerusalem's municipal boundaries, creating a greater metropolitan area and, in effect, the illegally de facto annexing of those settlements to Israel.

We emphatically recall that, regardless of the occupying Power's attempts to brand and justify its illegal measures and actions, all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal, constituting a flagrant violation of international law and absolute defiance of the international community's strong condemnations and demands for an immediate and complete cessation. Furthermore, settlement activities are in complete contradiction of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and are a major obstacle to peace, the prospects for which are diminished by the day as Israel presses on with this aggressive colonization campaign. These decisions, taken at the highest level,

including by the Prime Minister himself, are evidence of the occupying Power's actual objectives and its intent to take the parties and the region further and further away from peace.

We call upon the international community to take a firm and principled stand against all illegal Israeli actions against the Palestinian people and their land, including firmly demanding that it immediately cease all measures and provocations violating the status quo of the holy sites, stoking religious sensitivities and fuelling the current violence and bloody confrontations. As reiterated at the Arab foreign ministers' meeting, convened in Cairo yesterday, 27 July 2017, to address the Israeli violations and restrictions on the Aqsa Mosque, the Security Council, in particular, has a clear role to play in this regard and must act to uphold and implement its own resolutions. Moreover, the international community must act responsibly and take serious and bold action aimed at compelling Israel to cease immediately and completely all of its crimes and violations before it is too late and to act forthwith to end the occupation that began in 1967. These steps are urgent, long overdue and central to allowing the Palestinian people to finally live in freedom and dignity in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 616 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 21 July 2017 (A/ES-10/758-S/2017/632), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

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14 August 2017

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 11 August 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

We are compelled to draw your attention to the ongoing rise in tensions and violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as Israel, the occupying Power, continues its military aggressions and human rights violations against the Palestinian people. Israeli settlement activities, the blockade and bombardment of the Gaza Strip, home demolitions and evictions, military raids and inflammatory provocations are exacerbating conditions on the ground and confirming Israel's rejection of the peace that the State of Palestine remains committed to achieving, along with the rest of the international community.

In flagrant defiance of international law, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), and consistent demands to cease its illegal, destructive settlement campaign in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, the occupying Power continues to provoke and incite with repeated declarations regarding further plans to colonize the Palestinian land. Just last week, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu laid the cornerstone for a new settlement compound with more than 1,000 settlement units in the illegal "Beitar Illit" settlement, located south of Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank. In a speech at the ceremony marking the start of construction, Netanyahu hailed his Government's continuous work on illegal settlements and on serving the settler population, boasting that "no other Government has worked for settlements like my Government".

It should be recalled that "Beitar Illit" is the second largest illegal Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank. It was built in 1990 as part of the so-called "Gush Etzion" settlement bloc south of the occupied West Bank, which has nearly 50,000 illegal settlers. Here, it must be highlighted, intimidation, violence and constant harassment by extremist Israeli settlers, with the collusion and protection of the occupying forces against the Palestinian people and their properties, are also inflaming tensions and instability. Such unlawful actions are the cause of widespread suffering, fear and trauma among the civilian population. We reiterate our demand for the perpetrators to be held accountable for their crimes.

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Moreover, the occupying Power continues to impose measures of collective punishment against the entire Palestinian population living under its ruthless military occupation. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, measures of collective punishment, such as home demolitions, curfews, checkpoints and closures, not only continue but are escalating, deliberately, systematically and with grave impact.

Here, we wish to focus your attention on the pending evictions in Sheikh Jarrah, which is located to the north of the Old City of Jerusalem and is home to some 3,000 Palestinians. Sheikh Jarrah is a Palestinian neighbourhood that includes such landmarks as Orient House (the Palestine Liberation Organization headquarters in Jerusalem, forcibly closed by the Israeli occupying authorities since 2003), the Palestinian National Theatre and the headquarters of many diplomatic missions. The Palestinian presence in this area of the City, as throughout the entirety of Occupied East Jerusalem, is under serious threat as a result of the aggressive and unlawful policies and actions of Israel, the occupying Power.

Since 1967, Israeli policies in Occupied East Jerusalem have extended from two central strategies. The first is to create a Jewish majority in the city through the establishment of "Jewish-only" settlements. The second pursues the same goal by measures aimed at reducing the Palestinian population, using policies that either forcefully evict Palestinian families from Jerusalem or impede the growth and development of the community. This includes a policy of spatial segregation, that is, reducing the visibility, if not the demographic ratio, of Palestinians in their home city.

One of the main elements of the first strategy is the insertion of Israeli settler "outposts" at key strategic points within Palestinian neighbourhoods. Successive Israeli Governments have supported settler organizations in their intensive efforts to seize Palestinian land, homes and other properties in the neighbourhood, using methods such as the transfer to settler groups of ownership of land or property confiscated by the Israeli occupying authorities under the "Absentee Property Law" and the transfer of ownership of land classified as public or State land owing to its ecological, historical or religious importance.

In order to attain the goal of creating illegal settlements, the Israeli occupying authorities use various pretexts to seize properties and forcibly evict families. This is usually done with the complicity and help of obliging Israeli courts. This is the situation now facing the Shamasne family residing in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, who recently received an eviction order from the so-called "Execution Office of Israel's Enforcement and Collection Authority". The order stated that the family must vacate its home by 9 August 2017 or be forcibly evicted. Mohammed Kiswani, a community leader, explained that more 70 Palestinian families are being threatened with evacuation from the Sheikh Jarrah area.

In that regard, Mohammed Shamasne, 45 years of age, has stated that he "will not evacuate voluntarily". He has resided in his home in Occupied East Jerusalem his whole life, as his parents first moved into the house in 1964 and still live there, along with his wife and four children. His mother, Fathyeh, 75 years of age, added that she has "spent decades in this house; I raised my kids here and am raising my grandsons now — how could they think they can remove me from my house?" We call for the international community, including the United Nations, to mobilize to stop this latest eviction of yet another Palestinian family by the occupying Power and to spare them the further physical, mental and emotional trauma of being illegally and forcefully dispossessed, forced from their home and displaced by this cruel military occupation.

At the same time, Israel, the occupying Power, is continuing its arrest and detention raids throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Palestinian civilians are being detained daily, with young men and boys severely targeted by the occupying forces, who routinely assault, humiliate and severely abuse, including torture, those civilians arbitrarily arrested or detained. In fact, according to a joint report by the Palestinian Prisoners' Society, the Mezan Center for Human Rights, the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association and the Palestinian Committee of Prisoners' Affairs, the Israeli occupying forces detained 880 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the besieged Gaza Strip in the month of July alone. The report states that among the detainees were 144 children and 18 women and that the majority of the detentions took place in East Jerusalem and surrounding neighbourhoods, with a total of 425 detentions. We call for an end to this illegal practice and for Israel to release the nearly 7,000 Palestinian prisoners that it holds captive in its prisons and detention centres, in gross contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Moreover, in the Gaza Strip, the occupying Power is continuing its policies and measures of collective punishment against the entire Palestinian civilian population. Its illegal, immoral decade-long blockade continues to gravely affect the 2 million civilians there, who are suffering a dire socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis deliberately caused by the occupation. This past week, Israel also continued its aggression in the Gaza Strip, including a launch of air strikes in three different areas, injuring at least four Palestinians, including one who has been hospitalized with a fractured skull. In addition, the occupying Power is continuing to attack Palestinian fishermen sailing in Gaza's waters.

Moreover, according to recent news reports, Israel has announced that it is currently working on plans to build a so-called barrier around the Gaza Strip. This provocative and illegal scheme must be condemned and stopped immediately, for it surely constitutes a flagrant violation of international and international humanitarian law and places the Palestinian civilian population and the whole of Gaza, which has already been deemed by the United Nations as "unliveable" by the year 2020, in an even more precarious state.

The destructive impact of the above-mentioned Israeli violations is immense. This cannot be overemphasized in a situation marked by rising tensions, deteriorating socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions, and deepening anger and frustration among the Palestinian people living under this half-century-old occupation. We call yet again upon the international community, including the Security Council, to demand an end to all of the illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied State of Palestine, including in East Jerusalem. Israel must be held fully accountable, in accordance with international law and the principles of justice, for all of its violations and its continuing obstruction of peace.

This is a matter of urgency. It can no longer suffice to condemn or simply be appalled by Israel's illegal actions; serious international action, including practical measures, is necessary to bring an end to Israel's occupation. The Security Council must immediately act to uphold the duties of the Charter of the United Nations and implement its own resolutions, including its most recent, resolution 2334 (2016). This is the first and most vital step towards compelling Israel to end its aggression and crimes so that the Palestinian people can finally live in freedom and dignity in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 617 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 28 July 2017 (A/ES-10/759-S/2017/651),

constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

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Ambassador, Permanent Observer
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